You Asked

Based upon the scholarly presupposition that God gave the Law to Moses in about 1450 BC (+/-), what language would it have been given in relative to the development of Hebrew as a writing system with its own alphabet?

Perplexity pplx_alpha

The Law would have been given in an early form of **Northwest Semitic / Archaic Hebrew**, written not in the distinct "Paleo-Hebrew" script familiar from later biblical inscriptions, but in one of the earliest experimental alphabetic scripts — the **Proto-Sinaitic** (and its immediate successor, **Proto-Canaanite**) writing system — since a specifically "Hebrew" alphabet had not yet emerged as a distinguishable script in 1450 BC.

The 1450 BC Timeframe in Context

Scholars who hold the early or "biblical" chronology for the Exodus (following 1 Kings 6:1) place it around 1446–1450 BC, which would put the giving of the Law at Sinai in the same window. At that date, the alphabetic writing tradition that would eventually produce the Hebrew script had only recently emerged and was still in its formative, undifferentiated stage.[0]

Proto-Sinaitic: The Earliest Alphabet

The earliest known alphabetic inscriptions are the **Proto-Sinaitic** texts found at Serabit el-Khadim in the Sinai Peninsula, discovered by Hilda and Flinders Petrie in 1904–1905 and dated by most scholars to roughly the 18th–15th centuries BC, with some placing them as early as 1700 BC and others as late as the 15th century. This script consisted of a small number of consonantal signs adapted from Egyptian hieroglyphic-style pictographs, representing Semitic words acrophonically (the sign for "house," *bayt*, representing the sound "b," for example). Because these inscriptions were made by Semitic-speaking laborers working in Egyptian turquoise mines in the Sinai, this script is widely regarded as the direct ancestor of all later alphabetic writing, including what would become Phoenician, Paleo-Hebrew, Aramaic, and ultimately Greek and Latin letters.[1][2][3][0]

Proto-Canaanite: The Transitional Stage

By the Late Bronze Age (roughly 1400–1200 BC), this early alphabetic tradition had developed into what scholars call **Proto-Canaanite** script, used throughout the Levant among various Northwest Semitic-speaking peoples — ancestors of the later Israelites, Phoenicians, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, who had not yet diverged into clearly distinct scribal traditions. This means that around 1450 BC, if the Law was written down, it would most plausibly have used this still-generalized Proto-

Canaanite/Proto-Sinaitic alphabetic tradition rather than any script identifiable specifically as "Hebrew."[4][5]

When Did a Distinct Hebrew Script Emerge?

The **Paleo-Hebrew alphabet** — the script bearing recognizably distinct Hebrew letter forms — does not appear in the archaeological record until roughly the 10th century BC, with the earliest known example being the Zayit Stone inscription from Tel Zayit, dated to the mid-10th century BC, followed shortly by the Gezer Calendar from the late 10th century BC. This is closely related to, and essentially a regional variant of, the Phoenician alphabet, which itself descended from Proto-Canaanite. Distinctive Hebrew features become unmistakable by the time of the Mesha Stele (c. 840 BC) and later 8th-century inscriptions, showing that a mature, identifiably Hebrew scribal tradition took several centuries after 1450 BC to crystallize.[5][6][7][4]

Summary Comparison

Script Stage	Approximate Date Range	Relation to 1450 BC
Proto-Sinaitic	c. 1700–1400s BC	Contemporary; earliest alphabet, still forming [2][1]
Proto-Canaanite	c. 1400–1200 BC	Emerging shortly after/around this time; undifferentiated Semitic script [4][5]
Paleo-Hebrew (distinct)	c. 1000–500s BC	Does not exist yet; appears ~450+ years later [6][5]
Aramaic square script (modern Hebrew letters)	From c. 6th century BC	Millennium later, post-Babylonian exile [4]

Implications for the Language Itself

Even setting the script question aside, the spoken/written *language* at 1450 BC would have been an early, archaic form of Hebrew closely resembling other Northwest Semitic dialects of the period, such as Ugaritic and early Canaanite, rather than the more standardized Biblical Hebrew reflected in the vowel-pointed Masoretic Text compiled over a thousand years later. Jewish tradition itself, as recorded in the Talmud, debates this very question: some sages held that Paleo-Hebrew (called "ktav ivri") was the original script used by the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, while others held that the original "Assyrian" (square Aramaic-derived) script was later lost and only restored by Ezra the Scribe around 500 BC. Modern epigraphic evidence, however, favors the view that no dedicated Hebrew script existed as early as 1450 BC — the Law would have been transmitted first orally and/or recorded using the shared early Northwest Semitic Proto-Sinaitic/Proto-Canaanite alphabetic tradition common to the broader Canaanite-speaking world of that era.[8][0][4][5]